considered but could not be finalised due mainly to fund constraints. A proposal for modernisation of IISCO by utilisation of funds from the Steel Development Fund (SDF) is under consideration of the Government.

As IISCO has been referred to the BIFR, any scheme to be taken up for modernisation will have to be in accordance with the orders of the BIFR in this regard.

Boosting of Investment in Steel Sector

530. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed a 20 point agenda for boosting investment in the steel sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have any proposal to categorise steel as infrastructure industry and extend the benefits of infrastructure sector like exemption from minimum alternate tax and access to funds from IDFC; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) No, Sir.

(b) With the onset of the New Industrial Policy, iron and steel industry has been dereserved from the list of industries reserved for the public sector. Further, there is no requirement of Industrial licensing for setting up of iron and steel plants in the country save for certain locational restrictions. Since the Steel Industry has been opened up to the market completely, investment decisions for setting up steel plants etc. are a matter of commercial judgement on the part of the entrepreneurs.

(c) and (d) There have been requests to declare steel as infrastructure in order to avail benefits available to the infrastructure sector. However, this has not been acceded to by the Government at present.

गुजरात में इस्पात संयंत्रों में अग्नि की दुर्घटना

531. **श्री गोपालसिंह जी० सोलंकी:** क्या इस्पात मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या विगत में गुजरात में किसी इस्पात संयंत्र में एक बड़ी अग्नि दुर्घटना हुई थी;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ग) इस दुर्घटना में कितने लोग हताहत हुए और कुल कितने मूल्य की संपत्ति नष्ट हुई;

(घ) इस अग्नि दुर्घटना से इस्पात संयंत्र को अनुमानत: कितना वित्तीय नुकसान हुआ है और संयंत्र के बन्द होने से कितने श्रमिक बेरोजगार हुए; और

(ङ) भविष्य में ऐसी दुर्घटना की पुनरावृत्ति को रोकने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए गए हैं?

इस्पात और खान मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमेश बैस): (क) और (ख) यह सूचित किया गया है कि विद्युत संबंधी खराबी के कारण जुलाई, 1997 में मैसर्स एस्सार स्टील लिमिटेड (ई॰एस॰एल॰) के हजीरा, गुजरात स्थित संयंत्र में आग लगी थी। जिससे 20 दिन तक उनके इस्पात संयंत्र का एक भाग बन्द रहा।

(ग) से (ङ) मैसर्स ई एस एल ने सूचित किया है कि आग से कोई हताहत नहीं हुआ और सम्पत्ति को मामूली हानि पहुंची। कार्यों की कोई क्षति नहीं हुई। कम्पनी ने बताया है कि भविष्य में इस प्रकार की दुर्घटनाओं की रोकथाम को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए उन्होंने पर्याप्त कदम उठाए हैं।

Modernisation of Steel Plants

532. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the steel plants being modernised;

(b) the estimated cost involved, plant-wise;

(c) whether there has been cost overruns in the implementation of modernisation scheme;

(d) the details of production during 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(e) the measures being taken to produce such steel in the country which is being imported at present; and

(f) if so, the details threof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) have undertaken the modernisation of the following three steel plants:

1. Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP)

2. Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP)

3. Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL)

(b) Approved costs of modernisation programmes are as given below:

DSP: Rs. 2,668 crores (Base: 3rd Qtr. 88)

RSP: Rs. 3,954 crores (Base: Ist Qtr. 92)

BSL: Rs. 1,793 crores (Base: Ist Qtr. 94)

(c) Yes, Sir.

The details of cost overrun are as follows:—

DSP: Approved cost: Rs. 2,668 crores (Base: 3rd Qtr. '88)

Anticipated cost: Rs. 4,867 crores (Base: 3rd Qtr. 97)

Cost overrun: Rs. 2,199 crores

77% of the cost overrun is due to monetary and fiscal reasons and remaining 23% is due to physical reasons.

RSP: Approved cost: Rs. 3,954 crores (Base: Ist Qtr. '92)

Anticipated cost: Rs. 5,112 crores (Base: 4th Qtr. '97)

Cost overrun: Rs. 1,158 crores

95% of the cost overrun is due to monetary and fiscal reasons and remaining 5% is due to physical reasons.

BSL: Approved cost: Rs. 1,793 crores (Base: Ist Qtr. 94)

Anticipated cost: Rs. 2,235 crores (Base: 3rd Qtr. 97)

Cost overrun: Rs. 442 crores

83% of the cost overrun is due to monetary and fiscal reasons and remaining 17% is due to physical reasons.

(d) Saleable steel production by these plants during 1995-96 and 1996-97 has been as follows:

Unit '000T

Plant	1995-96	1996-97
Durgapur Steel Plant	947	1093
Rourkela Steel Plant	1148	1180
Bokaro Steel Plant	3330	3046

(e (and) f) As per the existing policy, import of steel is freely allowed. It is neither cost effective nor economical for any country to produce all grades/specifications and qualities of steel specially where the quantities required are comparatively small. The producers of steel are constantly orienting their production to meet the market needs. Modernisation and expansion of steel plants of SAIL has been taken up with this objective. Since 1991, Government has also adopted various policy measures to encourage creation of additional steel production capacities in the private sector. With the setting up of steel plants in the private sector, a major portion of the demand for steel which is presently imported is likely to be met by indigenous production.

Stock of Finished Steel

533. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the stock of finished steel in the steel mills in the country has increased towards the end of the year 1997; and

(b) if so, the details threof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The stocks of finished steel with the main producers increased to 1.95 million tonnes as on 31.12.97 as compared to 1.5 million tonnes as on 31.12.96. The market had subsequently picked up and the stocks got reduced to 1.63 million tonnes as on 31.3.98. The major reasons for increase in the stocks include:

(i) sluggish demand in steel consuming sectors;

(ii) overall economic slow-down in the country;

(iii) Greater competition from imports due to reduction in custom duties for finished steel; and

(iv) Dumping of finished steel in the country, particularly from CIS & South East Asian countries.